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FOREWORD

IFALUK is a small dot on the map: a half a square mile of land can hardly show much detail on any scale used for Pacific distances. Further, it is spelled "Ifalik" on most maps, through some accident in the history of official spelling for place names. The people who live there call their island in a way that might be rendered "Eefahlook" in a sort of English phonetic spelling. We figure that the people who live there ought to have the final say about the name of their island: hence our divergence from the map makers.

Ifaluk is one of the Caroline Islands, which form part of Micronesia. It is some 700 miles north of New Guinea, some 400 miles south of Guam, and about 1200 miles east of the Philippines. It is a part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, administered by the government of the United States.

Ifaluk is an atoll: a roughly circular reef, built by corals and other lime-secreting organisms, marking off a quiet lagoon in the open ocean, the reef in places piled up to form islets emerging a few feet above the level of the sea. Mr. E. H. Bryan, Jr., of the Bishop Museum, in Honolulu, has compiled a list of the islands of the world that could be classed as "atolls." He finds 409: 136 in Polynesia, 92 in Micronesia, 66 in Melanesia, 15 in Indonesia, 5 northwest of Australia, 68 in the rest of the Indian Ocean, 26 in the Caribbean Sea, and only one in the Atlantic. Atoll formation, then, is primarily a phenomenon of the tropical Pacific: and the word "atoll" carries with it the connotations of warm sun, of white beaches backed by graceful palms, of friendly dark-skinned people, and of an idyllic way of life.

Ifaluk, for us, lived up to these connotations, and we found our life there a continuously rewarding experience: an experience which, in writing this book, we are trying to share.

We tested several ways of meeting the problem of joint authorship. We tried being "we" which had a nice regal sound and worked well enough when we agreed. But we have a great talent for disagreeing,

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114 128 despite the underlying similarity of our points of view. We tried writing in the third person—Marston did this or Don thought that—but wives, friends, editors, said this made pretty flat reading. Finally we decided to split the book: Marston Bates would write the account for the period he was on the atoll; then Donald Abbott would take over for the remaining two months. The reader can thus expect to do one mental somersault, where "I" changes from Bates to Abbott between Chapters IX and X: Bates and Ted Burrows sadly going off with the Trust Territory ship, leaving Abbott with new companions to finish the study.

It is, of course, extremely presumptuous of us—of Abbott and Bates—to write about a study that also involved five other people. But the problems of multiple authorship seem insurmountable in a non-technical book and we wanted, in any case, to write subjectively, to write about our own reactions and feelings as well as about the people and things that we observed. In a very real sense, however, all seven of us achieved a "team approach" in our study of the atoll so that, whether they like it or not, all members of the team must share some responsibility for both the observations and the thoughts that we have expressed here. And certainly there must be a total sharing of the credit for whatever good may have come out of the Ifaluk enterprise.

114 The Ifaluk team consisted of:

Donald P. Abbott, marine biologist, of the Hopkins Marine Station of Stanford University, on Ifaluk from June 22 to November 9, and leader of the expedition from September 12 to the end.

Theodore Arnow, geologist and hydrologist, of the U. S. Geological Survey, on Ifaluk June 22–24 and September 12–26.

Marston Bates, biologist, of the University of Michigan, on Ifaluk from June 22 to September 12.

Frederick M. Bayer, zoologist, of the U. S. National Museum, on Ifaluk from September 12 to November 9.

Edwin G. Burrows, anthropologist, of the University of Connecticut, on Ifaluk from June 22 to September 12, and leader during this time.

Robert R. Harry, ichthyologist, of the George Vanderbilt Foundation, on Ifaluk from September 12 to November 9.